

August 17, 2000

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Dr. Jane Henney, Commissioner
Food & Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane Rm 14-71
Rockville MD 20857-0001

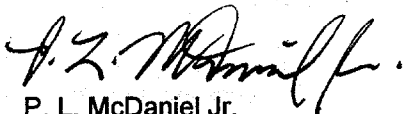
Dear Dr. Henney:

I am writing to urge you to ban the use of antibiotics as livestock growth promoters. Approximately 90% of all antibiotics used in agriculture are given to promote growth or prevent disease, rather than to treat infection. The benefit to agribusiness is rapid growth and lower costs, while the cost to consumers is the potential for ineffective antibiotic treatments.

A new study published in the **New England Journal of Medicine** links the use of antibiotics in poultry to America's growing resistance to antibiotics. The study contends that when livestock are given antibiotics to prevent infection and spur growth, they begin to build a resistance to the antibiotics. Repeated exposure to antibiotics causes resistant strains to evolve. Even after animals are slaughtered, the bacteria may remain and people may then ingest the antibiotic-resistant bacteria. We all know that antibiotics are critical for treating infectious disease, but due to overuse, they are failing to cure diseases.

Eliminating the use of antibiotics as growth promoters will do wonders to decrease the occurrence of antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria. This has been illustrated by a recent case in Denmark where the growth-promoting antibiotic **avoparcin** was banned. In a three-year period, the prevalence of antibiotic-resistant enterococci bacteria in chicken declined from 82% to 12%. I think we can do the same to protect our people here in the US.

Thank you for listening to my concerns,



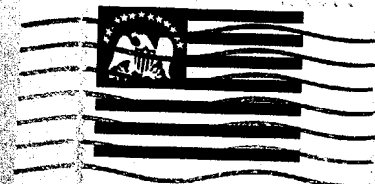
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cc: Senator Jeff Bingaman

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